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### Book Reading Habits of College Level English Language Teachers

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#### Abstract

Reading only textbooks or coursebooks is not enough for English language teachers. In addition to textbooks, they should read several books for their academic advancement. Keeping this in mind, this descriptive survey design under quantitative research tried to find out the book reading habits of the college level English Language (EL) teachers. The participants of the study consisted of 20 English language teachers who have been teaching English in different Tribhuvan University (TU) affiliated colleges located in Banke district. The participants were selected employing simple random sampling technique. The data was collected using a questionnaire which included altogether fifteen questions. The first ten questions were closed ended and the last five questions were open ended. The collected data was analyzed based on the descriptive statistics technique of data analysis. The results of the study showed that the average number of books the college teachers read in a year is approximately four. Similarly, the majority of college teachers have no habits of reading even a single book in a month. Another finding of this study is that college teachers prefer extensive reading over intensive one. Moreover, the college teachers believed that the library is the main source for college teachers to read.

**Keywords:** college teachers, comprehension, intensive reading, library

#### Introduction

Reading is a deliberate activity that involves creating word meanings. Reading with a purpose enables the reader to focus their attention and guide information towards a specific objective. According to Cross (1992), it is the amalgamation of visual and non-visual experience or behaviour. It is a process of decoding, understanding and interpreting information from pictures, signs, codes

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and written letters (Smith & Robinson, 1980). In the similar vein, Palani (2012) also writes that reading requires identification and comprehension. Reading, in a real sense, requires detailed or total understanding of the message given in the reading text. Good reading extracts not only the literary meaning but also the intention of the writer. Reading involves both mental and physical activities. In other words, it can be understood as an interactive process which requires interaction between a reader and the text. Richard (1998, as cited in Chaima, 2019, p.12) mentions “reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message.” Moreover, it is a dynamic skill which requires continual inference, predicting, verification, and self-questioning.

Reading is considered a habit when the activity of reading is repeated. Shen (2006) defined reading habits as how often, how much, and what people read. In a similar way, Wagner (2002) also expressed that the habits of reading may include the amount of material read, the frequency of reading and the average time spent in reading. In Sangkaeo’s (1999, as cited in Chhetri & Rout, 2016) opinion reading habit implies the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading. The habit of reading can be considered as one of the important mediums for the development of an important tool for the development of personalities and mental capabilities. In this context, Tella and Akande (2007) assert that reading is one of the powerful activities of self-educating, transforming life and society. Nweke (1990) also agrees that reading plays a real role for the intellectual development of an individual. In this perspective, Chettri and Raut (2013, p. 14) has also agreed and written “a good reading habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth and plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency.” Moreover, it is directly related to the total educational process in general and educational success in particular. The academic success of a person is based on the reading habit of a person. In the case of teachers, reading is considered the most essential activity. Reading is a very fundamental and attaining any international educational breakthrough.

Sufficient reading materials should be available to develop reading habits. In today’s world there is no shortage of reading material. Reading materials can be found everywhere. The reading materials are found in different forms. In this regard, Hassen (2016, p. 59) states that “the social world where we live in is unsurprisingly full of texts. There are unlimited books for people to study.” The possible reading materials according to Hassen (2016) includes:

Books, articles, magazines, newspapers, posters, dissertations, textbooks, pamphlets, blog posts, media coverage, government proclamations, analyses of government proclamations, activist manifestos, online books, posters, banners,

schedules, graffiti, email, text messages, announcements of the birth of professors' children, security warnings, maps and directional signs, historical placards, captions attached to bombastic statues, conference programs, course descriptions, online discussion forums, advertisements printed on the outside of bookstore sales bags, activist pin-on buttons, ID badges, job vacancies and others. (p. 59)

One can adopt different strategies to read and comprehend these different types of reading materials. Based on the perspectives of speed, a reader can employ normal, fast, and slow reading strategies. Normal reading involves reading at normal speed neither too slow nor too fast. This strategy is used while reading a medium type of text. The next, fast or rapid reading refers to the reading relatively at a fast speed. This strategy is used by native speakers while reading very simple and easy text. Likewise, from the point of view of purpose, reading strategies may involve intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading aims at assimilation of language skills including the study of words/phrases, sentences patterns and other related aspects. But, extensive reading is free and comfortable reading. Rivers (1968) said that extensive reading is reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is said. Likewise, from the point of view of focus, a reader can use skimming and scanning strategies. Skimming is a specific reading technique to go through reading text quickly in order to get the gist of it. It is a type of speed reading in which the readers make a rapid survey of texts to grasp the general theme or central idea of the text being read. On the other hand, scanning is a kind of search reading to find a specific word or piece of information. Readers mainly try to locate specific information and often they do not even follow the linearity of the passage in scanning. This is to say, the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of the reading text.

It is mandatory for teachers to read different types of reading materials apart from textbooks to deliver the contents more effectively. But most studies show that teachers don't have the habit of reading books apart from the textbooks. In this context, Trelease (2006) writes that teachers are seldom seen reading. Similarly, Adebayo (2009) also studied the reading habits of 100 high school teachers in Nigeria through questionnaire. His study has concluded that there is less reading habit among the teachers. Furthermore, his findings have shown that most of the teachers sampled do not read textbooks daily. Likewise, Palani (2012) investigated the reading habit of teachers in India. He employed a questionnaire as a technique to collect the data. The collected data was analyzed from the viewpoint of whether the participants read books or magazines or newspapers more. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data based on readers' social psychology and interests of various age-groups. The result has shown that the participants read less books

and more newspapers and magazines. In a like manner, Ahmad (2006) studied the attitude of teachers towards reading in Bangladesh. His study concluded the fact that teachers do not receive any training and they are reluctant towards reading. Besides this, the study has remarked that the teachers do not read a lot because of the lack of reading culture. Moreover, his study has confirmed that they mostly read magazines and newspapers rather than other reading materials just for pleasure.

In the context of Nepal, Chaffer (2010) has remarked that Nepali people do not read a lot. Even in terms of teachers, Bhattarai (2006) states that the major problems of the teachers are lack of reading materials and habits. He has further stated that nearly half of the teachers in Nepal are trained and even trained EL teachers do not read the books apart from the textbooks. This confirms that reading habits of Nepalese teachers have been declining these days. In fact, the teachers need to read various reading materials to be updated and refreshed in their profession. There are many reasons why teachers do not have reading habits. One of those reasons may be due to the lack of devotion in professionalism. Another reason could be the lack of adequate availability of the reading materials. All the colleges in Nepal do not have enough reading materials for the teachers. There are plenty of study materials available in the colleges around the city while colleges in rural areas lack it. This may be because of uneven development in the country, poor infrastructures, scarcity of financial resources, or centralized policy of the country. Moreover, well facilitated resourceful and well equipped academic institutions, international and national level libraries are confined within the capital city. In order to find ordinary books or reading materials, one has to visit the capital city. Another problem is not keeping the books other than textbooks in libraries. Libraries are found to keep only the cheap textbooks available in the market. Unauthorized textbooks books are more common in the college libraries. This kind of uncontrolled use of unauthorized reading materials has discouraged reading habits among the teachers and students.

It is also seen that teachers do not read the books even though they have enough reading materials. The main reason for this is that teachers do not have the habit of reading. Lack of study habits of the teachers has a negative impact on education in general and students' achievement in particular. Therefore, a teacher with a good reading habit can create interest and deliver necessary knowledge to the students.

The objective of this study was to find out the book reading habits of the college level EL teachers in Banke district.

## Methods and Procedures

This descriptive survey is framed on quantitative research method. Based on the convenient sampling, I selected TU affiliated colleges located in Banke as the area of the study. There are altogether ten colleges in Banke district including one constituent and nine affiliated ones. I selected five colleges among ten TU affiliated colleges employing sampling random sampling. A total of 20 EL teachers, five from each of these five campuses were selected as the sample population employing simple random sampling method. The technique used for the collection of data was questionnaire. There were fifteen questions in the questionnaire. The first ten questions were closed ended and the last five questions were open ended. Each question was set seeking their usual habit and strategies at reading. The closed ended questions had two to four options to measure their values, beliefs and understanding towards reading. The participants were free to choose the option that their experience and knowledge highly support their view based on their perception. The open ended questions were asked to find out their personal ideas on the basis of their experience and available means and resources in their social setting. The collected data was analyzed based on the descriptive statistics technique of data analysis.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study as the findings of the research. It also incorporates the analysis and interpretation of the results based on the response provided by the respondents.

### Annual Volume of Reading

The number of books which a teacher reads in a year is termed as the annual volume of reading here. The following table has clarified how many books each teacher studies in a year.

**Table 1**

*Teachers' Annual Volume of Reading*

No. of books	Number of teachers (f)	Mid value (m)	Fm
1-2	1	1.5	1.5
3-4	16	3.5	56
5-6	3	5.5	16.5
7-8	0	7	0
9-10	0	9	0
11-12	0	11	0
13-14	0	11	0

15 or More			
Total	20		$\Sigma fm=74$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma fn}{N} = 3.7$$

The average number of books the teachers read in a year is 3.7, i.e. approximately four books in a year. Of course, there is no exact figure for how many books an English language teacher should read annually. According to the definition made by the American Library Association (as cited in Akçay, 2017 p. 49) “readers who read less than 5 books a year are less likely to read, 6-20 books per year read at medium level, and readers who read more than 20 books per year are considered as well-readers.” If we look at these statistics as a basis it is a pitiable condition for the teachers to read three books annually on average. Looking at the results of the study, it was found that the teachers did not study at an adequate level. There is no doubt that teachers are the source of knowledge. Moreover, teachers acquire knowledge through reading. But without adequate reading, it is not possible to acquire knowledge. If the teachers do not acquire sufficient knowledge, the entire education system will fail. Therefore, it seems necessary for teachers to develop the habit of reading.

### Monthly Volume of Reading

The following table shows teachers’ annual reading volume i.e. the number of books they read in a month.

**Table 2**

*Monthly Volume of Reading*

No. of Books	No. of teachers (f)	Mid value (m)	Fm
0-1	19	0.5	9.5
1-2	1	1.5	1.5
2-3	0	2.5	0
3-4	0	3.5	0
4-5	0	4.5	0
Total	20		$\Sigma fm=11$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma fn}{N} = 0.55$$

The average number of books the teachers read in a month is 0.55. Even on a monthly basis, the teachers did not read a single book. This also confirms that teachers are not ready to read. There are no statistics on how many books an English teacher has to read on a monthly basis. But there is no doubt that the teachers should teach only by reading enough books along with textbooks.

### **Extensive and Intensive Reading Habit**

The table presented below shows the teachers' extensive and intensive reading habit.

**Table 3**

*Extensive and Intensive Reading Teachers*

S.N.	Habit	No. of Teachers	Percentage
1	Extensive Reading	16	80%
2	Intensive Reading	4	20%
	Total	20	100%

The data reflected that 80% teachers have extensive reading habits and 20% teachers have intensive reading habits. Statistics show that the teachers prefer extensive reading rather than intensive. For teachers, intensive reading is more important than extensive reading because a teacher should have detailed understanding after reading.

### **Preferred Medium of Reading**

Preferred medium here implies teachers' interest in reading books written either in Nepali or English medium. The table below shows the teachers' preferred medium of reading.

**Table 4**

*Teachers' Preferred Medium of Reading*

S.N.	Medium	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	English	8	40%
2	Nepali	3	15%
3	Both	09	45%
Total		20	100%

The above table presents the fact that most of the teachers prefer both English

and Nepali medium reading text that is to say 45% teachers like both English and Nepali medium reading text, 40% prefer only English medium reading text and 15% like to read the text which is in Nepali medium. Based on the statistics, only less than half of the teachers preferred to read English medium texts. But, the truth is that EL teachers have to read the books mainly in English medium. Why English language teachers don't want to read a book written in English can be a subject of research.

### Interest in Reading

The table presented below refers to the teachers' genre of reading. In other words, it shows what kinds of genres they especially have the habit of reading.

**Table 5**

#### *Teachers Genre of Reading*

S.N.	Book Types	No. of Teachers	Percentage
1	Literary	6	30%
4	Professional development (Academic)	5	25%
5	Political	4	20%
5	Film and Glamour	0	0%
6	Personal development	1	5%
7	Religion	1	5%
8	Art and Culture	0	0%
9	Philosophy	2	10%
10	History	0	0%
11	Technology	1	5%
Total		20	100%

The table above represents what kinds of special featured reading materials they like to read. The result shows that literary books (30%) are among the most frequently read works of college teachers. The books most frequently read by teachers after the literary books are professional development (25%), political books (20%), philosophy (10%), personal development (5%), religion (5%) and technology (5%). College teachers read more literary genres such as novels, poems and stories



despite the fact that teachers feel the need to read in these areas. Şahiner's (2005) research also found that teachers prefer to read literary books more than other types of books. Although the results of this study are similar to those of other studies, what teachers really need to read is perhaps more about professional development books.

### **Habit of Reading at Particular Time and Place**

The table below presents the teachers' reading habits at a particular time and place. That is to say when and where they take reading materials with them to read.

**Table 6**

*Teachers Habit of Reading at Particular Time and Place*

S.N.	Particulars	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Long Journey	4	20%
2	Long vacation	13	65%
3	Long waiting	1	5%
4	Irregular meeting	1	5%
5	Work Place	1	5%
Total		20	100%

The table shows the teachers' particular habit and particular time and place of reading. It shows that EL teachers particularly take the reading materials with them when they are on a long journey. 20% percent read most when going on a long journey. 65% read when they are on long vacation. Only 5% teachers read during long waiting and irregular meetings and 5% teachers read at their working place. That is to say they carry reading materials for the purpose of reading at their schools. A place does not have much influence to read and a teacher can read anywhere if s/he has inner motives to read. Showing the large number of teachers (65%) reading only during long vacation confirms that teachers do not read at times other than vacation. In fact, a teacher should always be reading for career advancement.

### **Length of Time Spent in Reading**

Results related to the length of time that college teachers spend reading a book every day outside of their class time are shown in the following table.

**Table 7***Time Spent in Reading*

S.N.	Time Spend in Reading	No. of Teachers	Percentage
1	10-30 minutes	12	60%
2	31-60 minutes	6	30%
3	61-90 minutes	1	5%
4	91-120 minutes	1	5%
5	120 minutes and over	0	0%
	Total	20	100%

The data shows that 60% of the college teachers spend time reading books between 10 and 30 minutes during the day. The rate of teachers who read books between 31 to 60 minutes is 30%. A total of 5% participants were found to be studying for 61 to 120 minutes. Similarly, only 5% of the college teachers found to spend 91 to 120 minutes during the day. But, no one was found to be studying for more than 120 minutes a day.

**Source of Reading Materials Used by Teachers**

The source from where the teachers get the books for reading is termed as source of reading materials. The following table reflects the possible sources which the participants used to read the books.

**Table 8***Sources of Books*

S.N.	Sources	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Visiting book fairs	1	5%
2	Sharing books	1	5%
3	Visiting book stores	13	65%
4	Visiting library	5	25%
	Total	20	100%

The table above shows that 65% of teachers visit book stores to get reading materials. 25% of teachers visit the library to find reading materials. Only 5% of teachers visit book fairs and share books in order to get new reading materials. This data shows a very poor habit of visiting libraries and sharing books which is the

cheapest way of finding new and interesting reading materials. The teachers' most practiced strategy in order to develop reading habits, visiting book stores and buying books is supposed to be costly and difficult to sustain. It may be because of the poor library management.

### **Teachers Responses on Availability of Reading Materials**

The table below presents the availability and abundance of reading materials in the public and private schools on the basis of their responses. It shows teachers' beliefs about whether the schools have enough reading materials in their schools or not according to the needs of teachers and students.

**Table 9**

*Teachers' Responses on Availability of Reading Materials*

Abundance Scale	Teachers' response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	2	10%
Disagree	18	90%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The data above shows that 90% of teachers agree that there are not sufficient numbers of reading materials in their colleges. That is to say, they do not agree that their colleges have sufficient books and other reading materials for the teachers and students according to the need, interest and age level. Only 10% teachers agree that their colleges have abundant reading materials. But, no teacher strongly agrees that they have an abundance of books and other reading materials.

### **Teachers' Believe on the Effects of Reading for Professional Updating**

The table presented below refers to the strength of beliefs of the teachers towards their professional updating through reading. In other words, how many teachers believe that regular reading habits can support updating professional knowledge?

**Table 10***Belief of Teachers on the Effects of Reading for Professional Updating*

Strength of Belief	No. of teachers	Percentage
Strongly agree	15	75%
Agree	4	20%
Disagree	1	5%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The data presented above represents the teachers' belief towards reading and professional updating. According to the data 75% teachers strongly agree that reading can support an updated language teaching profession. It shows that  $\frac{3}{4}$  teachers strongly believe that a regular reading habit is necessary for professional updating. Furthermore, the data shows 20% of teachers just agree that reading can support professional updating. This shows that teachers have a positive attitude towards reading habits. Only 5% of teachers have shown disagreement towards the relation between reading and professional updating.

### Conclusion

The result of the study has confirmed that the college teachers do not have the habits of reading books other than textbooks prescribed in the textbooks. Because, based on the guidelines given by the American Library society, teachers who read four books on average in a year cannot be considered as good readers. Moreover, the result shown by monthly book reading habits of the teachers helps us to conclude that the college teachers do not read the books on a regular basis. Such a fact justifies that the lack of interest in reading habits among the teachers may have adverse effects in teaching and learning processes. Therefore, it seems very essential to involve college teachers in reading activities. For this, local governments, school administrations can manage various reward and promotion policies based on the teachers reading activities. A teacher needs deep knowledge even after reading any type of book. But the results show that college teachers prefer extensive reading than intensive reading. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to read intensively. For this, the concerned campus should provide textbooks to the teachers and they should be asked to read and prepare the worksheets. On the other hand, based on the teachers' answers, it was found that they prefer Nepali medium textbooks to read rather than medium ones. For this, the concerned campus should arrange the books written in English medium

in the library. Teachers should also be encouraged to develop the habit of reading by buying English Medium books. More specifically, the professional development of a teacher is possible mainly through reading. Therefore, the textbooks that help in the professional development of the teacher should be managed in the library.

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